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III.

GERMAN SOCIALISM IN AMERICA.

PART II.

IN a preceding paper we have considered the actual condition of the Socialist organization in this country. We now propose first to direct our attention to the great questions of Centralization and State Rights, which must ever play an important part in the consideration of Socialism in America.

Before the great Revolutionary epoch, the political forces of France were represented by a central government on one side and the people on the other. Between the Grand Monarque and the people there was a great gulf, until at last the homogeneity of the popular majority overturned the balance and constituted itself the supreme power to which centralization had led. On the other hand, no dualism, such as had characterized the English Government since the Revolution of 1688, could have brought about such radical changes in the structure of any society. Far less is it at first sight easy to conceive how changes, so revolutionary in their character, could be wrought under a government swayed by such equally balanced forces as the founders of our Constitution would claim to have bequeathed us. But it is questionable whether these forces can be preserved in a balance sufficiently nice to guard our nation from reactionary evils. Centralization, on the one hand, leads to the sacrifice of personal effort. The strict observance of State rights, on the other, so tends to weaken the power of the central Government that in moments of popular commotion the Administration is powerless to act. A remarkable instance of this weakness and ambiguity of our constitutional laws occurred during the late strikes, when a dispute arose as to the power of jurisdiction vested respectively in the State and in the central Administrations.

Much time was consumed in this discussion by telegraph, while the troops remained inactive. The same difficulties have been repeatedly encountered during the whole period of Southern reconstruction.

The extension of the suffrage may be considered the principal cause which gave rise to the earliest development of modern socialism. It conferred upon the working-classes a predominance of political power, and exposed the people to the promptings of self-seeking agitators such as Lassalle. Even in England, where, in Mr. Gladstone's words, "inequality lies imbedded in the very base of the social structure," the general clamor of the age has been yielded to, and, strangely enough, the suffrage was there, as in Germany, extended by the most conservative and bureaucratic of governments. It is from America, the nursery-ground of indiscriminate suffrage, that this most important and most operative of all modern social facts has spread its influence over the lands of the Old World. The political student of the future will note with interest the singular fact that universal suffrage should have found its most congenial home in two countries, the one governed by the most aristocratic, the other by the most democratic system of modern times. Nevertheless in their points of resemblance may be found the kindred causes which expose the American Union and the German Empire to identical dangers. And to these cognate influences may be partially attributed the origin of Socialism in both countries. It is, indeed, in the prevalence of bureaucratic principles in Berlin and Washington that we may seek and find many of the true sources of the modern evil. It is none the less remarkable that in both countries the very centralization which engenders Socialism forms, as we shall presently see, the most powerful bulwark against its spread.

In the struggle for national entity, the German people, by striving to provide the central Government with adequate means of insuring and compelling political unity, conjured down the storm which had been gathering and muttering since the days of 1848. The vast and unencumbered power of the imperial administration had a weakening effect upon the self-reliance of the people by imbuing many with a belief in the more effectual and universal application of the Federal forces. With us in America the late struggle for unity during the civil war lent many of the same characteristics to the Federal Government, and produced, though more silently, similar effects. The Government which arose at Washington after the rebellion was conspicuous for the concentration and responsibility of its powers, and that each fresh extension of the

principles of centralization put forth was a fresh check upon individualism can not be doubted. To this tendency must be attributed much of that reactionary receptiveness which has of late characterized the minds of our working-classes. For, while it can not be denied that protection, which Professor Fawcett regards as the main root of the whole evil in the United States, has carefully prepared our soil for the growth of Socialistic ideas, yet we are not inclined to believe that its influences have operated so powerfully as the champions of free trade in the Old World would have us suppose. To the foreign observer the shackles of protection in the United States must ever appear more confining and coercive than is revealed by a close study of our industrial and geographical development.

That the results of the civil war have brought about, and indeed compelled, many fresh extensions of the principles of centralization is a fact that can no more be denied than the increased reliance on state assistance resulting from these changes. Indeed, the powers which during the period of reconstruction have found their focus at Washington have by their acts far distanced any coercive measures ever adopted by the German Chancellor. The invasion of a State Legislature by Government troops would alone justify this assertion. For the last twelve years the dependence of our people upon the central Government has increased day by day. The power of patronage has grown apace, while bureaucratic principles have attained the highest development ever reached in this hemisphere. With each fresh extension of the principles of centralization confidence in individual effort has relaxed, giving place to state effort and state help. If there is anarchy in the South, the Government must suppress it. If a railway corporation is in difficulty, the Government can assist it. If the commercial interests of the country are paralyzed, Congress votes relief in the questionable form of "cheap money." If sickness, and suffering, and poverty prevail, the state can relieve them. If there is lack of work and widespread poverty, the Administration can bring relief. It is in this condition of mind that the Socialist refugees from Germany find certain classes in the United States, and it is due to these tendencies that it became possible to unfurl the red flag on our shores. But, although it is true that centralization in the United States and Germany has greatly contributed to the spread of reactionary principles, yet we repeat that wherever it has shown its face in either country this very concentration of power has saved society from the impending danger.

Thus, paradoxical as it may seem, centralization has proved itself at once the bane and the antidote of this Social epidemic. This fact is attested in Germany by the enforcement of the anti-Socialist bill, and in America by the employment of the Federal forces during the riots of 1877. So long, therefore, as elements subversive of the best interests of modern society continue to be fostered by certain portions of the community, so long will centralization, despite its attendant evils, maintain itself as the bulwark against the advancing foe. As such, its power must and will be extended before it can be curtailed. It may indeed be doubted whether the feeble forces now at the command of a national Administration would prove adequate against a well-organized and extensive uprising of the laboring classes; nor can the confused and undetermined condition of our laws respecting the autonomy of States tend to strengthen the hands of a Government already paralyzed by Congressional legislation.

None can fail to deplore the gulf which now separates capital and labor. While the intelligence of the country can not but lament the present complete separation of industrial interests, and must view with apprehension the aggregation of vast fortunes in the hands of the ambitious and unscrupulous, and while it should be the earnest aim of all to diminish the great sum of human misery, yet the most dispassionate must fail to see a remedy in the general upheaval of society for the furtherance of such mischievous and impracticable schemes as those advanced by German Socialism. There undoubtedly must come the time when, as Monsieur Louis Blanc once said to the writer, "the relations between governors and governed will find some final adjustment." Time, the great umpire, must decide this grave problem. In no wise, however, can the whole web of social life be unraveled and woven anew, nor can state management be ever brought to permanently and universally supersede individual effort. Such a system of servitude and restraint is alike impracticable and impossible. The actual movement has perhaps in it the seeds of successful and disastrous revolution calculated to destroy all law and liberty. Yet its outcome can never, in the opinion of the wisest economists, the most humane statesmen, and the first philanthropists be anything but chaos. Far from being akin to Socialism, coöperative associations have proved most effectual against the progress of revolutionary principles. This fact has been recognized by the most despotic rulers of the age. Prince Bismarck has on all occasions encouraged the formation of such societies, even so

far as to propose assistance from state funds, and by removing every obstacle which might impede the acquisition of capital for the establishment of the new industry. In the same manner the late Emperor of the French appointed a commission of distinguished economists and statesmen charged with the founding and encouragement of coöperative associations in France.

Experience has abundantly shown that this new industry may be brought to a perfection which will go far to insure the workman an industrial independence. The coöperative credit banks established with so much success in Germany by Herr Schultze-Delitsch, and opposed so violently by Ferdinand Lassalle, have tested the practical value of such combined organization. The number of these banks in Germany is now nearly a thousand, and such coöperative banking societies would furnish excellent substitutes for those inhuman institutions termed savings-banks in our own land. Each member of the bank is jointly and severally responsible for the debt of all. The security thus afforded is so complete that the sums annually advanced often exceed \$100,000,000.

Equally encouraging and anti-Socialist in their character have been the coöperative stores organized with such success in England and other countries of the Old World. Modern industrial society has known no greater improvement, and none more likely to extend its beneficent influences over the whole surface of civilization. It is the first step pregnant with practical results which may tend to raise the poor to self-help, intelligence, and competency. The development and encouragement of such organizations in this country would without doubt do much to stay the spread of Socialism in the United States. Indeed, the aim of all capitalists should be to assist the progress of such associations, as being directly opposed to the organic dogmas of modern Socialism, as well as to the perpetration of such rascalities as have been recently practiced upon our people by the corrupt management of savings and other institutions.

In touching the subject of corruption in this country, it would in this article be out of place to yield to the temptation of investigating the grave charge that the American trustee is the most dishonest man ever placed upon this planet. We will not examine a question so foreign to our purpose and so distasteful to our people. More than sixty years ago Daniel Webster spoke the words of truth, if not of practice, when he said :

These, then, are the evils which threaten the duration of our Government, and against which all the well-meaning and all the wise men should

unite their efforts: the assiduity and impudence of office-seekers, the licentiousness of the press, the abuse and perversion of the right of suffrage, and, above all, the violence of party spirit, which has shown itself in the hands of demagogues the most tremendous engine of mischief ever wielded against the liberties of a free people.*

If during this long lapse of years we have not instituted reform, it has been because the American people have set their face against reform. The Union can never be reformed by an administration, as some would have us believe. It is the administration which must be reformed by the people. But, if the people of the United States prefer organized corruption to honest government, it would seem at least expedient, even from this standpoint, to take timely measures for the preservation of society from the evils so graphically foreshadowed by Lord Macaulay, in a characteristic letter written two years before the civil war to a citizen of Pennsylvania, and of which we feel justified in giving the following extracts :

I have long been convinced that institutions purely democratic must, sooner or later, destroy liberty or civilization, or both. In Europe, where the population is dense, the effect of such institutions would be almost instantaneous. What happened lately in France is an example. In 1848 a pure democracy was established there. During a short time there was reason to expect a general spoliation, a national bankruptcy, a new partition of the soil, a maximum of prices, a ruinous load of taxation laid on the rich for the purpose of supporting the poor in idleness. Such a system would, in twenty years, have made France as poor and barbarous as the France of the Carlovingsians. Happily the danger was averted; and now there is a despotism, a silent tribune, an enslaved press. Liberty is gone, but civilization has been saved. I have not the smallest doubt that, if we had a purely democratic government here, the effect would be the same. Either the poor would plunder the rich, and civilization would perish, or order and prosperity would be saved by a strong military government, and liberty would perish. You may think that your country enjoys an exemption from these evils. I will frankly own to you that I am of a very different opinion. Your fate I believe to be certain, though it is deferred by a physical cause. As long as you have a boundless extent of fertile and unoccupied land, your laboring population will be far more at ease than the laboring population of the Old World, and, while that is the case, the Jefferson politics may continue to exist without causing any fatal calamity. But the time will come when New England will be as thickly peopled as Old England. Wages will be as low, and will fluctuate as much with you as with us. You will have your Manchesters and Birminghams, and in those Manchesters and Birminghams hun-

* See article by Daniel Webster, in "North American Review," October, 1816, p. 107.

dreds of thousands of artisans will assuredly be sometimes out of work. Then your institutions will be fairly brought to the test. Distress everywhere makes the laborer mutinous and discontented, and inclines him to listen with eagerness to agitators who tell him that it is a monstrous iniquity that one man should have a million while another can not get a full meal. . . . Through such seasons the United States will have to pass in the course of the next century, if not of this. How will you pass through them? I heartily wish you a good deliverance. But my reason and my wishes are at war, and I can not help foreboding the worst. It is quite plain that your Government will never be able to restrain a distressed and discontented majority. For with you the majority is the government, and has the rich, who are always a minority, absolutely at its mercy. The day will come when in the State of New York a multitude of people, none of whom has had more than half a breakfast, or expects to have more than half a dinner, will choose a Legislature. Is it possible to doubt what sort of a Legislature will be chosen? On one side is a statesman preaching patience, respect for vested rights, strict observance of public faith. On the other is a demagogue ranting about the tyranny of capitalists and usurers, and asking why anybody should be permitted to drink champagne and to ride in a carriage while thousands of honest folks are in want of necessities. Which of the two candidates is likely to be preferred by a workingman who hears his children cry for more bread? I seriously apprehend that you will, in some such season of adversity as I have described, do things which will prevent prosperity from returning; that you will act like people who should in a year of scarcity devour all the seed-corn, and thus make the next a year not of scarcity, but of absolute famine. There will be, I fear, spoliation. The spoliation will increase the distress. The distress will produce fresh spoliation. There is nothing to stop you. Your Constitution is all sail and no anchor. As I said before, when a society has entered on this downward progress, either civilization or liberty must perish. Either some Cæsar or Napoleon will seize the reins of government with a strong hand, or your republic will be as fearfully plundered and laid waste by barbarians in the twentieth century as the Roman Empire was in the fifth, with this difference, that the Huns and Vandals who ravaged the Roman Empire came from without, and that your Huns and Vandals will have been engendered within your own country by your own institutions.

These are strange and ominous words—the more ominous, indeed, since a few years have in part tested their truth and wisdom. In an age where the events of a whole year of our fathers are often crowded into the narrow compass of a month, sometimes of an hour, we have seen the shadow of Macaulay's prophecy come upon us with a rapidity that would have astonished the great historian himself. The sails of the Constitution are still set with the stars and stripes streaming at the fore, the mizzen, and the peak. But the

anchor is still wanting, and we are drifting carelessly and swiftly onward to the unseen rocks ahead. No Cæsar or Napoleon has yet seized the reins of government, but who can tell the day or the hour when the safety of civilization in this hemisphere will call for one? In that dark hour he will appear as surely as Napoleon succeeded Robespierre, or our civilization will perish. One legislative act alone on the part of Great Britain exasperated by commercial depression would bring unexampled distress upon our people. A retaliatory tariff enacted by the British Parliament could for a time paralyze all the industries and agricultural interests of the United States. And, when it is considered that about seven tenths of our population are engaged in agricultural pursuits, it seems difficult to predict the future which a few years hence awaits this preponderating portion of our people. England, to the detriment of her own agricultural interests, now consumes two thirds of our agricultural products. American wheat and corn are at present sold in Liverpool at lower prices than they can be produced at in England. The demand in England for agricultural products can certainly not increase in the same ratio with our rapidly growing supply. And, when it is considered that the agricultural supply of the rest of Europe by far exceeds its own demand, it is not easy to foretell the fate which awaits the landed interest of this country.* With the dangers which even a temporary depression of industrial interest would threaten, shall we calmly and inactively await the complete fulfillment of Macaulay's words, or shall we seek such antidotes as will avert the day of danger?

The political pharmacopœia should prescribe such remedies before the disease is past cure. These lie as much in the jealous protection of the rights of society and government as in the mitigating influences which may be brought to the assistance and protection of the poor. All conspiracies against the body politic should be more zealously detected and punished than those against individuals.

* This paper was in print previous to the recent indications of a return to protection in England and in France. In the recent debate in the House of Lords on the commercial depression in England, Lord Beaconsfield acknowledged that the depression of agricultural interests was unprecedented, and that the depression was anticipated when protection was abolished. He declared that the estimated loss of the public wealth had diminished by £80,000,000 sterling, and that the area of land under cultivation had diminished by one million acres. On the 30th of March last a delegation from agricultural committees, in sixty departments of France, called on President Grévy with resolutions against the renewal of the treaties of commerce, and in favor of the protection of wheat.

Plots against the life of the Government and existing society should call for the same legal limitations that are enforced against any plots designed to assail the life or freedom of individuals. Destitution should be reduced by coöperation in its best estate, by an extensive organization of industrial institutions, providing temporary work for the workless of every class, and facilitating the readjustment of vocations. If necessary, such organizations should be encouraged, though not absolutely supported, by the State or Federal administrations. By preserving a proper balance between centralization and State rights, the central Government should rigorously extend its protection to those who have no power to protect themselves. Thus legal limits should be imposed upon the length of a day's work for children. The indigent poor should be relieved by a system of charity based upon the French plan, which is ever prepared to meet even unforeseen emergencies, and which is to-day the only one approaching perfection. It is not calculated to weaken individual or national character, nor does it incur such waste as is common in our own charitable distributions. Through lack of a perfect, permanent, and general system, our own benevolent institutions' effect comparatively little good. The Federal powers, while preserving supreme authority in supreme emergencies, should, however, vigorously repel all assaults upon individual responsibility.

But even at the risk of slightly extending its functions the Government should set its face against certain monopolies which are calculated to disturb the peace of the country by aggregating into single hands gigantic fortunes. Indeed, this country, ever distancing in magnitude the precedents of other lands, boasts fortunes which can be matched neither by the proudest peer of England nor the richest of the Rothschilds. Twenty years hence these fortunes, already overgrown, will in the ordinary course of events have at least quadrupled, and none can tell for what effects they may be responsible unless wielded by men of unexampled wisdom and unflinching justice. At the same time the rights of property should be jealously asserted both in the Legislature and in the court of justice. We have recently seen the Legislature of a great State, despite the protestations of property-holders, grant to certain elevated railway corporations rights possibly ruinous to many private interests. Such acts prepare the way for further decisions of a marked communistic character. Not less so were the Granger decisions given by the Supreme Court some years since. It is impossible to overstate the magnitude of the peril thus handed down by tribunals

from which there can be no appeal. No intelligent property-holder, no thoughtful man of business, can view it with composure, indeed hardly without terror.

It is true that, with the advent of free trade, and the rapid reduction of the national debt, some of the present dangers may vanish. Nor can it be doubted that colonization, coupled with an enforced but limited protection against creditors, after the manner of the homestead law, would go far to relieve the busy centers of the Union. But all the antidotes that the mind of man could devise would not silence the seditious tongues that are daily pouring their venom into the souls of the people. An end should be put to all plots against society. The man of capital, and the man whose only capital is his labor, should alike wish it. Let Congress, by investigating the principles and proceedings of the Socialistic Labor party, first assure themselves of its pernicious nature, and then let it proceed to destroy by legislation this network of conspiracies. Let our legislators next assure themselves that the organization is led and inspired by German agitators, and, if they are true to their trust, they will proceed to a general revision of the immigration laws. A thousand Chinamen can not bring to our shores the mischief that is brought by one apostle of Lassalle. The time has come when America should cease to be the "dumping-ground" of Europe. Horde-like immigration, with its collateral consequences, if it ever was a blessing to the United States, has ceased to be so now. It has become the curse of an answered prayer. Not only has it reduced to one half the population of pure and genuine descendants of the choicest race that in modern times has dwelt upon the earth, but it has peopled our soil with the worst refuse of other lands. It would indeed seem high time that legal limitations be at once imposed upon indiscriminate immigration.

No one can blame Prince Bismarck for the sagacity with which he secretly encourages the emigration of German Socialists to the United States. The application to this purpose of the enormous sums supplied by the secret-service fund and of the revenues derived from the confiscated estates of the Crown of Hanover, is a fact well known to many statesmen of Europe, though ignored by our own. Our daily papers are constantly announcing the fresh arrival of Socialist leaders driven from their own country by the recent repressive measures. It is not to the German Chancellor that we must look for protection against these importations. It is to our own Government, which is highly censurable for not taking notice of such arrivals, as

was done by Secretary Fish, though unfortunately but on one similar occasion. In Germany the Imperial Government, supported by the Church of Rome, is straining every effort to drive the Socialist from his native soil. Count Cavour once predicted an Ultramontane alliance with the Socialist movement, and for some time the tide of events seemed to turn in that direction. But, whatever the ultimate results may be, the bull lately issued by the Roman Pontiff against the German Socialists plainly indicates that the astute mind of the "man of blood and iron" has enlisted on his side the powerful influence of Leo XIII. Every nerve is strained to eradicate the evil spirits by proceedings before which some of the persecutions of the middle ages must pale, and which invoke emigration as a blessing. The two millions of human beings recently disfranchised by the German Reichstag are indeed in a plight which must excite the pity if not the sympathy of their direst enemies. For them there are "no judges at Berlin"—none of the peaceful and unmolested reunions in which the German heart delights—no meetings with closed doors—no common purse—no journals or publications advocating their own views—no printer, no publisher, no bookstand, to give their writings to the world—no tavern to offer an asylum—no social chat over the accustomed "lager"—no singing society, no charitable association, no reading club, not even a prayer-meeting. The police is everywhere omniscient and omnipotent. All meetings, unions, or associations, either guilty or open to the suspicion of being guilty of encouraging socialist opinions or theories subversive of the existing order of society, are declared to be illegal. No opportunity is afforded to the Socialist for proving his innocence. Not even the public law courts are left to determine whether an offense has been committed. The *lois des suspects* enacted in France by the Second Empire was in principle mild compared with the measures attending Prince Bismarck's crusade. The iron will and hand of the police alone have jurisdiction over millions of German citizens, and the steps by which suppression is enforced are of a character so drastic and arbitrary that exile becomes a boon compared with the suffering to be endured under the ban of the new law. And America alone offers to these outcasts the hope of unmolested combination. With these facts before them, will the people of the United States persist in their usual course of apathy so long as their apparently immediate interest is not affected? Then let them consider that not only the best interests of society, but the best interests of property, are at stake. On the eve of grave events

our people are ever more sanguine than those of other countries. It was so before the great war of secession. It was so before Black Friday. It was so before the strikes of 'Seventy-seven. No sooner did the danger become visible, than all marveled how it could have come so suddenly upon the country. Yet, in the case of the strikes, we had had our warning on the day succeeding the Christmas of 'Seventy-six.

The part of Cassandra is ever an ungrateful one. We are far from disposed to predict that the Commune will rage or reign here to-morrow or next day. In the history of a people a few years count as nothing. The industries of the country wear for the present an improving aspect ; but the dark hour of commercial depression must come again, so surely as the night succeeds the day. The plant which has found root in our soil must be killed before it bursts upon us full-blown. The powerful and growing organization which now honeycombs the country must be laid low before we have forgotten the smoldering fires of Pittsburg and the insurrection which extended through fourteen States of the Union—an insurrection which destroyed millions of property and hundreds of lives, in many cases successfully defied the local authorities, and for the first time in American history revealed its power to an organized mob.

No thoughtful man can dwell upon our defenseless future without fear and apprehension, although the great mass of our people close their eyes to dangers past and coming. With that same tranquillity and inward satisfaction with which honest Lucretius gazed from the land upon the wrecking ship, does the average American mind view the mighty struggle now waging in the German Empire.

Yet never since the rebellion did a graver question present itself for legislation. The Administration or the man therefore that will call the attention of Congress to the necessity of suppressing all conspiracies against the Government and society, as well as to the necessity of radically revising the immigration laws, will have deserved well of future generations. Continued ignorance of the true condition of the social substrata which are showing themselves in our own land can only lead to lawlessness or force, and perhaps to the fulfillment of Mr. Carlyle's spiteful epigram, which declares the United States to be but "an anarchy plus a policeman."